

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3313

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The Honorable Charles P. Rettig
Commissioner
Internal Revenue Service
1111 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20224

Commissioner Rettig:

As we approach the 2022 tax filing season, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is still dealing with backlogged tax returns from the previous two years.

I joined my colleagues on a letter sent to you November 19, 2021, where we expressed our concerns to you about the IRS's preparedness for the upcoming tax filing season. There is still a massive backlog of unprocessed returns from the 2020 and 2021 tax seasons. With a staggering 14.6 million unprocessed returns, I am concerned about how the IRS plans to resolve these issues before they get larger.

My concern is underscored by frequent outreach from my constituents about the processing delays and inadequate taxpayer assistance. This massive backlog is causing significant and unnecessary burdens for families and small businesses who cannot get answers from the IRS about why their returns have not been processed. The IRS is in danger of falling into a vicious cycle that will harm millions of taxpayers for years to come. This problem is being exacerbated by policies that have offices working at diminished capacity.

As the rest of America has adapted to COVID-19 issues by working remotely it seems the IRS is stuck using an outdated strategy allowing their offices to work at a diminished capacity. While I recognize the IRS must take precautions when dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, those precautions are not an acceptable excuse to sideline taxpayers' needs. Vaccines are widely available and the rest of the country has learned to adapt and operate normal business during the COVID-19 pandemic. Other essential industries whose job functions require in-person work have found a way to stay open since the initial lockdowns. Without the help of your employees to complete returns and deal with individual concerns, my constituents are left uncertain about the resolution of their problems. It is time to end the slow processing and lack of transparency by the IRS.

These failures by the IRS are leaving my constituents behind. One constituent filed his 2019 tax return in April 2020, which he needs so the IRS can issue him a 4506-T form to participate in an SBA program. It took nearly a year and seven months for the IRS to notify him that they had lost his return and he needed to send a duplicate. He promptly did so and is still waiting on the return to be processed. The lost return is a concern in itself. But the glaring issue continues to be the response time to the taxpayers, which highlights the importance of the IRS providing more transparency and explaining what is causing the backlog and what the agency is doing to solve it.

Another constituent ran into a myriad of issues, including the IRS suspending the processing of her return and her identity being stolen. For months she was unable to get assistance from the IRS, causing her undue distress. The processing of the return is still suspended, and this constituent needs the return to be processed in order for her daughter to complete her FAFSA form. The IRS needs to fix its current stagnation to prevent many families like this one from losing out on thousands of dollars in scholarships and grants due to the IRS's failure to promptly process tax returns. My overarching question is this: When do you plan on the IRS being up to date with the backlog of tax returns from previous filing years?

The Biden Administration needs to adopt a laser-focus on the unprocessed returns backlog. The first step in this is to maximize in-person staffing until this backlog is under control. The IRS must take urgent action now to alleviate the backlog and be ready for the start of the 2022 filing season. I look forward to you providing a swift and urgent response that this matter deserves.



Ted Budd
Member of Congress